

REMARKS

Claims 1-11, 14-16 and 26-34 are pending. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended, claims 26-34 are added, and claims 12, 13, and 16-25 are cancelled, without prejudice, or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Support for the amendment to claim 1 and new claims 26-34 can be found at least in the specification in paragraphs [0028]-[0034] and Figs. 2, and 3A-3B. No new matter has been added.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that claims 10 and 24 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. However, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are allowable for at least the following reasons.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9, 11, 16, 18-23 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,580,042 to Taniguro et al. (Taniguro) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,712,357 to Tranquilla. Claims 16 and 18-23 and 25 are cancelled, and thus the rejection of claims 16, 18-23 and 25 is moot. The rejection of claims 1-9 and 11 is respectfully traversed.

Taniguro and Tranquilla, alone or in a permissible combination, both fail to disclose a nipping force changing unit that includes a cam member, a cam follower, a spring that contacts with the cam follower, an arm that includes a receive portion and a roller holder portion, and a support shaft, as recited in independent claim 1.

With respect to independent claim 1, the Office Action admits that Taniguro fails to disclose a nipping force changing unit that changes a nipping force of a pair of first conveyor rollers and a controller that controls an operation of the nipping force changing unit in accordance with the position of a recording medium detected by the detector, as recited in independent claim 1. The Office Action relies on the teachings of Tranquilla as allegedly satisfying the deficiencies of Taniguro. Particularly, the Office Action alleges that the pinch

force relief mechanism 152 of Tranquilla is equivalent to the claimed nipping force changing unit. Applicant respectfully disagrees with this assertion.

Applicant respectfully submits that the pinch force relief mechanism 152 of Tranquilla can not reasonably be considered to equate to the claimed nipping force changing unit, because the pinch force relief mechanism 152 of Tranquilla does not comprise a cam member, a cam follower, a spring that contacts with the cam follower, an arm that includes a receive portion and a roller holder portion, and a support shaft, as recited in independent claim 1.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 is patentable over Taniguro and Tranquilla. Further, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2-9 and 11 are patentable at least in view of the patentability of independent claim 1, from which they depend, as well as for the additional features they recite. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

The Office Action rejects claims 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Taniguro in view of Tranquilla and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,129,749 to Sato. As discussed above, claims 12 and 13 are cancelled, and thus the rejection of claims 12 and 13 is moot. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

The Office Action rejects claims 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Taniguro in view of Tranquilla and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,619,451 to Dodge. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

This rejection is premised upon the presumption that Taniguro and Tranquilla disclose all of the features of independent claim 1, from which claims 14 and 15 depend. As discussed above, Taniguro and Tranquilla do not disclose all of the features of independent claim 1. Thus, claims 14 and 15 are patentable at least in view of the patentability of independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features it recites. Furthermore, Dodge

does not satisfy the deficiencies of Taniguro and Tranquilla. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

The Office Action rejects claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Taniguro in view of Tranquilla and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,053,224 to Burkard et al. (Burkard). As discussed above, claims 17 is cancelled, and thus the rejection of claim 17 is moot. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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